naccrra

The Nation's Network of Child Care Resource & Referral
Committed to the development and learning of all children.

March 3, 2007

The Honorable John Sinrud
House Appropriations Committee
Montana House of Representatives
State Capitol
Helena, MT 59620

Dear Representative Sinrud:

As a native Montanan and the Executive Director of our nation's leading voice for child care, I urge you to help children in Montana and their working families by restoring $4.2 million to child care provisions in Governor Schweitzer's budget. With federal funding for child care frozen throughout the past six years, states need to make additional investments to keep pace with inflation and to keep families working. These funds will allow Montana to annually update child care scholarship eligibility for working families to 150% of the federal poverty index and allow a few more children to receive scholarships. These funds will also annually adjust reimbursements to small child care businesses based on market rates and assure children with scholarships have access to 75 percent of the quality child care in their regions. These provisions are necessary to help low income children have the early learning experiences they need to arrive at kindergarten ready to succeed.

NACCRRA is the National Association of Child Care Resource & Referral Agencies. We work with Child Care Resource & Referral agencies throughout the country, including the 12 who serve Montana. We and our members will continue to push for federal reauthorization of child care funding to support a high-quality, affordable child care system that ensures children can learn and families can work.

NACCRRA recently released a report ranking the states on their child care standards and oversight. Montana earned less than half of the possible points. Now is *not* the time to cut child care funding in Montana.

I appreciate your commitment to Montana children, their families and the businesses that employ them.

Sincerely,

Linda Smith
Executive Director